

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 2005

AGENDA ITEM NO: 16

SUBJECT: BUS STRATEGY

Report of the Passenger Transport Executive

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1. Bus Strategy consultation responses and next steps

2. INFORMATION

2.1. There is a statutory requirement to produce a revised Bus Strategy as part of the second West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.

2.2. The development of the draft revised Bus Strategy has been overseen by the Authority's Bus Working Group. A draft version was approved for consultation and was circulated to PTA Members in July.

2.3. Consultation on the draft Strategy commenced in June 2005 and formally closed in October 2005 although dialogue with operators is still ongoing.

2.4. The consultation document was written to set out analysis underpinning the proposals in the draft Strategy. It was not primarily intended for the general public as market research and other consultations were used as the main sources of public views of bus services and priorities for the Strategy.

2.5. A wide range of responses has been received, principally from the public/user groups, District Councils and operators. These responses are summarised below.

Public / User Groups

2.6. The public/user group response was by way of a questionnaire on the web, to PCC members and interviews at bus stations. In total responses were received from around 300 people.

2.7. The public/user group response from questionnaires can be summarised as follows:

- Reliability and punctuality is the most important issue for passengers (in line with Metro's own market research).

- A very large majority consider the objectives of the Bus Strategy to be correct.
- Over 80% believed that the strategy would make bus use simpler, bus services more reliable, lead to more passengers and improve access to key facilities.
- 60% thought that targets for patronage and satisfaction should be more ambitious than those stated. Whilst these targets are being reviewed, the modelling suggests (taking into account demographic changes) that the targets are achievable but stretching.

District Councils

- 2.8. Detailed written responses have been received from both Wakefield and Kirklees Councils. Discussions are taking place with other District Councils.
- 2.9. Kirklees Council thought that the strategy needed strengthening in a number of respects, including greater emphasis on Demand Management and taxis. Their response also contained a view that Bus Quality Contracts would be required to implement a strategy that met the wider economic, social and environmental objectives of the Council.
- 2.10. Wakefield Council would like to see, amongst others, a wider role for Community Transport and greater emphasis on demand management.
- 2.11. Discussions with District Councils are ongoing and will include future network reviews in line with the Best Value Review of Accessibility.

Bus Operators

- 2.12. Operators broadly support the aims and objectives of the strategy and many of the proposals but have expressed a number of concerns.
- 2.13. These concerns relate to a difference of views around branding, ticketing, achievability of network stability and end dates on timetables, the role of smartcards and integration between services and between modes.
- 2.14. Bus operators, in general, consider that the Bus Strategy, if amended in a number of respects, could be delivered through partnership arrangements and do not consider that Quality Contracts are required.

Implementation Options

- 2.15. The consultation draft identified a number of options for implementing the bus strategy, including partnerships arrangements (voluntary or statutory) and Bus Quality Contracts.

- 2.16. The Transport Act 2000 states that Bus Quality Contracts should be the “only practicable way” of implementing the Bus Strategy. The Authority will need to carefully consider delivery options.

Next Steps

- 2.17. The drafting of the final Bus Strategy is of fundamental importance. It is therefore proposed to hold a seminar for all Members of the Authority to consider in detail the core elements of the bus strategy following discussions at the Bus Working Group.
- 2.18. The outcomes of these events would be used as the basis for
- detailed discussions with bus operators about the delivery of the Bus Strategy, with operators invited to demonstrate how and when partnership working would deliver the strategy.
 - the production of a ‘user friendly’ version for further consultation with bus passengers.
- 2.19. This work would be completed in December/ early January in order to allow further reports to the Bus Working Group and to the PTA in February, at which time the full Local Transport Plan and Bus Strategy will need to be considered.
- 2.20. In addition, Kirklees Council have passed a resolution calling for Bus Quality Contracts as a means of improving local bus services. Whilst the Bus Strategy covers a number of generic issues such as branding and ticketing that covers what the bus service will look like it does not specify in detail where buses should go.
- 2.21. The Best Value Review of Accessibility recommend a review of commercial and tendered services using Accessibility Mapping software.
- 2.22. To this end, Metro staff are working closely with Kirklees Council to undertake network reviews and develop a specification of an overall network of bus services that would better meet the Council’s economic, social and environmental objectives and to meet accessibility standards in line with Metro’s recent Best Value Review.

3. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The costs of the further work identified in this report can be met from approved budgets.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None as a result of this report.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. The draft Bus Strategy takes account of Equal Opportunity Considerations.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1. That progress in developing the bus strategy is noted.

6.2. That a seminar be held for all PTA members.

Director General
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive